

## **Arthritis**

**Overview:** Arthritis is inflammation of one or more joints. A joint is the area where two bones meet. There are over 100 different types of arthritis. When the cartilage that cushions between bones wears down the result can be the bones rubbing together causing irritation, swelling and stiffness at the joint. The most common type of Arthritis is Osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis is a disorder affecting our joints; causing pain and gradual deterioration of function. Every joint is composed of two bones with a gap between them. Lining the bone on either side of the gap is a smooth material called cartilage that allows the joint to move freely. In the gap between the two cartilage surfaces is joint fluid. Around the joint is a capsule called the synovium. It contains the joint fluid. Overlying the synovium are ligaments and muscles keeping the joint intact and the bones in place.

In osteoarthritis there is a progressive loss of the smooth cartilage, exposing the rough bone underneath. The bone will compensate by increasing its growth. This causes spur formation where the ligaments and capsule attach to the bone. This combination of exposed bone and spurs make the joint stiff and painful.

### **Causes:**

- Joint overuse
- Obesity
- Fractures
- Trauma to the soft tissues (cartilage)
- Genetics